

TEENAGE SUICIDE PREVENTION

THEME: THE SILENT CRY

OPENERS:

1. Suicide is the deliberate intention to end one's life. - Channing L. Bete Co., Inc., 1986
2. Suicide is the leading cause of death among persons aged 15 to 24 years.. . The rate of suicide among young males is five times that among young females. Firearms are the most common method of suicide. Among young females, attempted suicide is reported more frequently than is completed suicide, - misawa.af.mil
3. Some causes of teenage suicide are: family problems, depression (a feeling of sadness, hopelessness), significant loss, social isolation, poor self-esteem, peer pressure to succeed, problems with growing up. - Channing L. Bete Co., Inc., 1986
4. "Suicide prevention: Everyone's responsibility." - Wagner, Joseph, Lt Col, Combat Edge, 1998
5. Suicide rates among those aged 10-14 years are increasing at the highest rate among adolescents. This indicates that intervention must begin before age 10. - Kathryn M.; Petersen, G. J., Educational Review, 2000
6. "In 1997, suicide was the third leading cause of death among children and adolescents, ages 10-19 years old in the United States." - Borowsky, I. W.; Ireland, M.; Resnick, M. D., Pediatrics, 2001.
7. The United States along with other countries in the United Nations are developing effective strategies to focus directly on suicide prevention. - Kathryn M.; Petersen, G. J., Educational Review, 2000
8. Suicide does not discriminate and affects males, females, and all racial/ethnic groups.
9. There are some secrets you keep and some you don't. If someone is going to get hurt, that is not a secret you keep. - Col Bryan W. Cooper, CAP Wing Commander
10. Every 17 minutes another life is lost to suicide. Every day 86 Americans take their own life and over 1500 people attempt suicide. Suicide is now the eighth leading cause of death in America. - National Strategy for Suicide Prevention
11. Programs to combat suicide have been developed less often than violence prevention programs and are often begun after a suicide has occurred. - Klafat, Educational Review, 1998

DISCUSSION PROBES:

1. What is Suicide? What are some of its causes?
2. Why is suicide popular among children and teenagers in the United States?
3. List ways you can help prevent someone from committing suicide?
4. If you were asked to keep a secret that involves a plan to commit suicide, what would you do? Why?
5. Why do you think children or teenagers feel that suicide is the only way out?
6. Do you think that the media has an influence on teenagers who are thinking about committing suicide? If so, how?
7. Why is suicide prevention important in CAP, home, school or other places?
8. Why should all threats be taken seriously?

9. Who would you consider to be an expert in suicide prevention?

10. Make a poster for the squadron that lists the signs of thinking about suicide. The National Mental Health Association says the warning signs include:

- \225 Verbal threats such as "You'd be better off without me" or "Maybe I won't be around anymore."
- \225 Expressions of hopelessness and/or helplessness
- \225 Previous suicide attempts
- \225 Daring and risk-taking behavior
- \225 Personality changes (i.e. withdrawal, aggression, moodiness)
- \225 Depression
- \225 Giving away prized possessions
- \225 Lack of interest in the future

11. Make a poster that tells you what to do if a friend or relative is suicidal. The National Mental Health Association suggests the following:

- \225 -Trust your instincts and believe that the person may attempt suicide
- \225 -Talk with the person about your concerns. The more detailed their plan, the greater the immediate risk
- \225 -Remember that the most important thing is to listen
- \225 -Get professional help - even if the person resists
- \225 -Do not leave the person alone
- \225 -Do not swear to secrecy
- \225 -Do not act shocked or judge the person
- \225 -Do not counsel the person
- \225 -Can you think of others?

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Suicide is the third leading cause of death in children and teenagers, but it is preventable.
2. Act quickly to do all you can to prevent someone who is thinking about committing suicide.
3. Remember, a person usually tells someone of their plan to commit suicide before they actually do it.
4. The more detailed the person's suicide plans are, the sooner you need to seek help and offer to accompany them to the emergency room.
5. Remember you cannot control what the person decides to do.

BRINGING IT HOME:

1. Become aware of the signs and ways to prevent suicide.
2. Show concern for someone who is feeling sad or unhappy.
3. Listen: ask questions.
4. Suggest to your CAP unit to invite a behavioral health professional to talk about suicide prevention.
5. Familiarize yourself with helpful resources found on the Internet, at school, or your local library.